



WEEKLY VIETNAM INDICATORS

Week Ending 25 March 1972

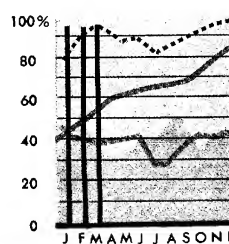
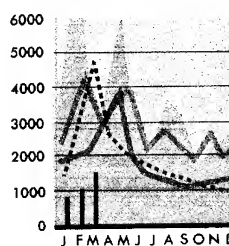
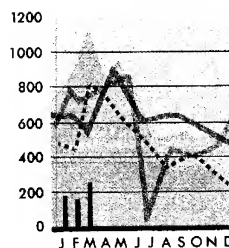
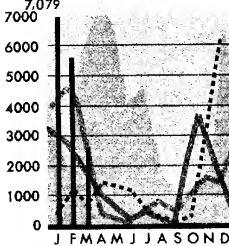
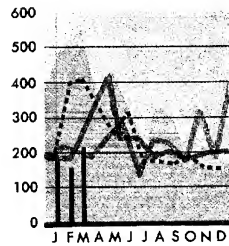
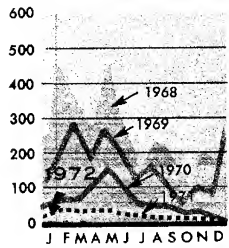
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*Top Secret*

NSA review completed

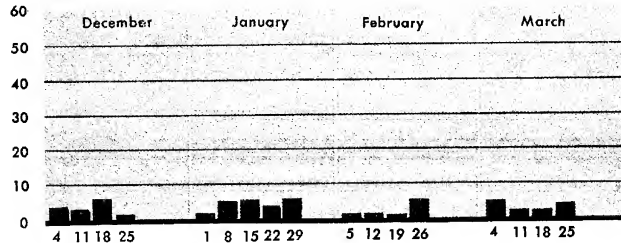
SOUTH VIETNAM WEEKLY INDICATORS

1968-1972
Weekly average for each month



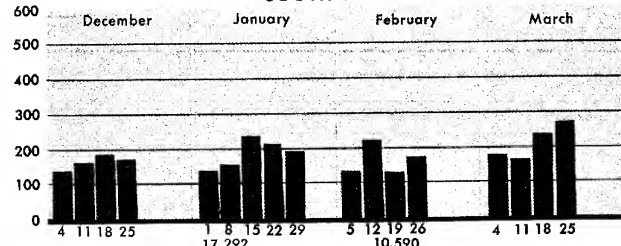
DECEMBER 1971 - MARCH 1972
Weekly data as reported

US BATTLE DEATHS increased to four from the two reported last week.



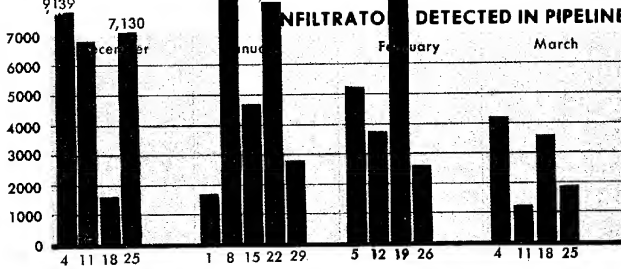
SOUTH VIETNAMESE BATTLE DEATHS

rose from last week's 239 to 272. The official total will change as late reports are received and will be lower than the figures released to the press by the GVN.



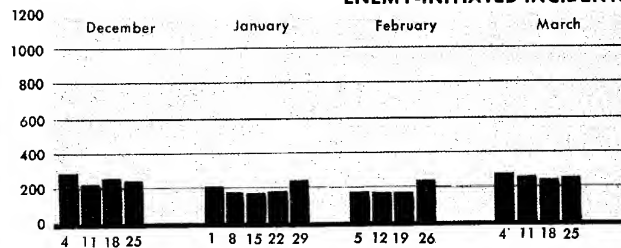
INFILTRATION DETECTED IN PIPELINE

include 5 regular, and six special purpose groups totaling 1,919 personnel. The infiltration estimate for Cambodia and South Vietnam since 1 October now stands at 98,500 - 100,500.



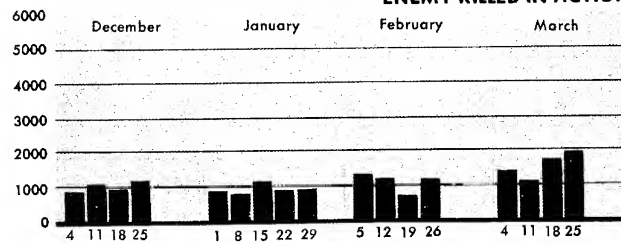
ENEMY-INITIATED INCIDENTS

increased to 235 from last week's 227.



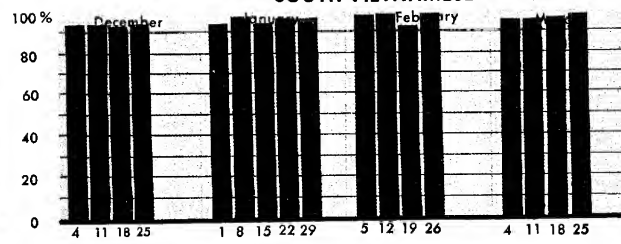
ENEMY KILLED IN ACTION

climbed from last week's 1,731 to 1,981, the highest weekly total since 3 July 1971.



SOUTH VIETNAMESE EFFECTIVENESS

as measured by the percentage of enemy killed by GVN forces, increased to 99% from last week's 98%.



Statistics for the latest week shown are preliminary

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Enemy Activity

Enemy-initiated activity in South Vietnam increased somewhat during the week, but the overall level of action was still fairly low. In Military Regions (MR's) 1 and 2, the enemy's effort consisted primarily of shellings and limited ground attacks. The most significant engagement occurred on 24 March, when an ARVN battalion was hit hard while on a bomb damage assessment mission approximately 18 miles north of Kontum City. The attacking force was a North Vietnamese Army (NVA) unit of regimental size, whose primary objective seems to have been the protection of a large supply complex in the area. The sharpness of the action, therefore, did not signify the start of the long-heralded major offensive in the Western Highlands. That offensive, however, could come at any time with little or no further warning. [redacted] enemy forces are already in an attack posture, particularly in Kontum Province. In MR's 3 and 4, enemy activity was at a comparatively low level. The ARVN cross-border operation into Svay Rieng Province of Cambodia is beginning to wind down. Little ground combat occurred during the operation, but large quantities of rice and other supplies were either captured or destroyed. This may hinder future enemy operations either in eastern Cambodia or the lower half of South Vietnam.

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In Laos, the North Vietnamese offensive against Long Tieng which began on 18 March continued throughout the week. Four of the nine friendly strongpoints on Skyline Ridge are now in enemy hands; the remaining five are still in friendly hands. Elsewhere in northern Laos, the enemy took advantage of the Lao armed forces day holiday weekend (22-23 March) to initiate a series of attacks northeast of the Royal Capital of Luang Prabang. As a result of that enemy action, an element of a friendly force operating along Route 13 south of Luang Prabang has been detached and sent north to reinforce the capital defenses. In southern Laos, there has been light action with no major gains by either side.

The pace of enemy activity in Cambodia has increased markedly. On 21 March, the Communists broke a three-month lull by staging a spectacular artillery and rocket attack on Phnom Penh. Pochentong Airport, crowded refugee quarters, and the government's radio station bore the brunt of the attack. Later in the week, Communist sappers also severely damaged the Japanese-built bridge over the Tonle Sap northeast of the city. In southern Cambodia, an enemy divisional command and control entity with two subordinate regiments moved from the Route 4 area to a position near the South Vietnamese border. This move is probably a reaction to joint Cambodian/South Vietnamese clearing operations now underway in Kampot and Takeo Provinces.

Enemy Infiltration and Logistics

The acceptance of an additional 1,919 personnel during the week brings the estimate of NVA infiltrators into Cambodia and South Vietnam since 1 October 1971 to some 98,500 - 100,500. There are some indications that a further 6,000 troops, possibly destined for the Western Highlands of MR 2, may also have entered the infiltration pipeline. A recent exhaustive review of infiltration data has led to a change in the analytical methodology used by the intelligence community on the infiltration problem. In the future, infiltration groups whose size is unknown will be arbitrarily assigned a strength figure of 500 rather than the figure of 570 previously used. This will probably reduce the total infiltration estimate for the period since 1 October 1971 by some 7,000 personnel -- i.e., from the 98,500 - 100,500 range given above to a new estimated range of 91,500 - 93,500. The revised estimates will not be completed until after the current infiltration season ends in May, however, and until then estimates partially based on the old group size will continue to be used.

Enemy logistics activity in southern Laos and Cambodia continues, though there are some signs in communications intelligence that the effort is being plagued by weather and support shortages.

Communist Developments

Madame Binh's return to Paris on 24 March, after a six months absence, may presage some reformulation of Communist negotiating proposals. Meaningful changes in the Communists' basic position, however, are probably not in the cards at least until after the next round of military activity in South Vietnam.

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